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# VALLEY STAR

the independent student newspaper

los angeles valley college's



Could recent victories for same-sex marriage foreshadow change in California?

SEE OPINION PAGE 3



The Valley College Orchestra put its spin on Rock n' Roll classics on Saturday night.

SEE VALLEY LIFE PAGE 4



The women's basketball team ended its season Saturday with a victory against Glendale.

SEE SPORTS PAGE 6

lavalleystar.com

February 22, 2012

Volume 76 Issue 1

## VALLEY FEELS THE EFFECTS OF MORE BUDGET CUTS



IN LOVING MEMORY - Students from Pierce College marched at their campus' Coffin March that happened at Pierce last Wednesday. The march depicted the funeral and death of education because of ongoing school budget cuts.

### New cuts mean increased fees and fewer classes at Valley College.

KEVIN JERSEY  
STAFF WRITER

Valley College and its students will be hit hard by upcoming cuts to the California budget, leading to an increase in tuition fees and a decrease in the number of classes offered.

Already hurting due to decreased funding, community colleges throughout the state face the loss of an additional \$102 million after a new set of cuts were triggered when California revenues did not meet expectations. In

response to the initial cuts, tuition will be raised state-wide from \$36 to \$46 per unit for the fall 2012 semester, though the increase will do little to offset the reduction in state funds.

"It's almost inconsequential," said Valley President Sue Carleo, who has already seen cuts across the board at the school. And now, with another round of budget cuts, most departments will suffer even more. "There's really not much else to cut," Carleo said. "So, what we are going to have to do now is prioritize and determine if there are going to be layoffs. And, that's the hard facts. That's where we are."

To this point, most of the savings have come through offering fewer sections of most classes, including drastic cuts to the winter

and summer sessions. However, administrators are being forced to consider the possibility of eliminating the winter or summer sessions completely. Students are beginning to feel the effects of the limited class offerings.

The reduced number of classes is making it difficult for students to enroll in those they want to take. This, in turn, means that it is taking longer to complete the classes they need in order to finish their degree or meet transfer requirements.

"It's definitely slowing me down," said Jennifer Gavilanez, a biochemistry student who hopes to become a pharmacist. "I was expecting to take five classes this semester, and I only got three. It's pretty ridiculous."

Students at Pierce College

have staged a unique protest that they are calling a Coffin March. They are taking a coffin on a tour of community colleges to Sacramento, filling it with letters from students along the way, and hoping that these letters can convince the state legislators to spend a bit more of the budget on the state's students.

Carleo sees the value in this sort of action. "I think it's really important for the legislators and the governor to hear directly from students," she said. "They're not going to listen as much to me as they are to all of you."

Gov. Jerry Brown is already aware of the needs of the state's community college system. He has introduced a ballot initiative for the November 2012 election that would use a .5-percent sales

tax hike along with an increase in income tax for California residents earning more than \$250,000 per year to raise additional funds for schools. Eleven percent of those funds would go directly to community colleges. But, even if the initiative passes, it won't solve the schools' budget problems, according to Carleo.

"There's no question it will help," Carleo said. "But, it's still not enough to even keep us where we are today."

Though the outlook is grim, Carleo is determined to do as much as she can for Valley students.

"We will just do our best to try to stay focused on helping students succeed and just hope that at some point in the near future things start to turn around again."

## INFORMING THE CAMPUS ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

### The Financial Aid Office will host an awareness event to educate students on grants and scholarships.

DAVID MOTTE  
STAFF WRITER

Many students who could qualify for financial aid never apply because they don't know how or think they are ineligible. Wednesday Feb. 29, the Valley College Financial Aid Office will host its annual Financial Aid Awareness Event to showcase all available funding options to students.

The event will take place in Monarch Hall from noon to 2 p.m. and will consist of booths representing every state, federal, and scholarship fund available. There will also be booths dedicated to loans and part-time employment.

"Almost every student knows about financial aid," said Financial Aid Supervisor Silvia Diaz. "They only think

one option is available [and] we want them to have all the information."

There seems to be many misconceptions about financial aid amongst students, such as having to be a full-time student or U.S. citizen. Students do not have to attend full time to receive aid, although awards are adjusted based on current enrollment status. There are also eligibilities for non-citizen students who require financial help.

"I didn't know there were other options," said sociology major Abby Smith. "I had heard that I needed to be a full-time student to receive the Cal Grant. I'm not quite full time, but I do need help with books and other things."

The state-funded Cal Grant and federal-funded Pell Grant are not the only forms of financial aid available to Valley students. Other state funds include the Chaffee Grant, which is limited to foster youth, and the

[See FINANCIAL AID, Page 2]



"JUST DO IT" - More than 25 students received free HIV testing Feb. 14 from the Valley Student Health Center.

## VALLEY STUDENTS "LOVE RESPONSIBLY"

### More than 20 students got tested for HIV, thanks to a Valentine's Day event held by the Student Health Center.

FATIMA JIMINEZ  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

This Valentine's Day, some Valley College students received the gift of free HIV testing through the Student Health Center's annual event, "Love Responsibly."

The rapid HIV testing van was located at the Allied Health & Science Center from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. "Love Responsibly," organized by the Student Health

Center, was created to promote safe sex. The event also included a "Living with HIV" lecture by Ken Murray in the Student Service Center's multipurpose room, and Planned Parenthood was also on campus for students to use as a resource.

Many walked by the testing van, looked at the sign and contemplated whether they should

[See LOVE RESPONSIBLY, Page 2]

## CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION CARRIES ON

After completing two new parking lots, the construction at Valley College moves to the Media & Performing Arts Center.

ANNE CHRISTENSEN  
STAFF WRITER

As the spring semester moves into its third week at Valley College, the ever-present signs of construction and renovation projects are tough to ignore. Restricted parking, street closures and dilapidated bungalows are a constant reminder that despite much progress, Valley still has a long way to go.

Biochemistry major Salvador Macias, 22, has gotten used to the construction on campus. "It's been going on for so long now," Macias said. Parking off campus or using public transport means that Macias has not experienced Valley's newest project: the renovation of parking lot A on the corner of Fulton Avenue and Burbank Boulevard. Instead, Macias focuses on the aging buildings. "The classrooms could be better, especially the math building and the planetarium. They're very antiquated," said Macias.

Scheduled to finish by mid 2015, 24 projects have been completed and 13 are in various stages of construction, design or planning. The scope of "reVitalizing Valley College" is only surpassed by Pierce College's 41 projects to Valley's 39. However, recent L.A. Times articles have exposed misappropriation of funds and nepotism within the Los Angeles Community College District and its contractors.

LACCD Chancellor Daniel LaVista has launched a full investigation before proceeding with future projects on any of the district's nine campuses. This could interfere with both the funding

[See CONSTRUCTION, Page 2]

### MONARCH BASKETBALL



### Playoffs

The Monarchs face off tonight at home against College of the Canyons in the first round of the Western State Conference playoffs. Tip off is slated for 7 p.m. Follow us for a game feed on Twitter @lavcvalleystar.

### ONLINE SLIDESHOW



### Photos of the Week: Namm 2012

These features and more can be found in full @ [www.lavalleystar.com](http://www.lavalleystar.com)



## THE VALLEY STAR INFO &amp; STAFF

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## CONSTRUCTION

Continued from page 1

and scheduling for "reVitalizing Valley College" since Valley has \$250 million on hold, pending the result of the investigation.

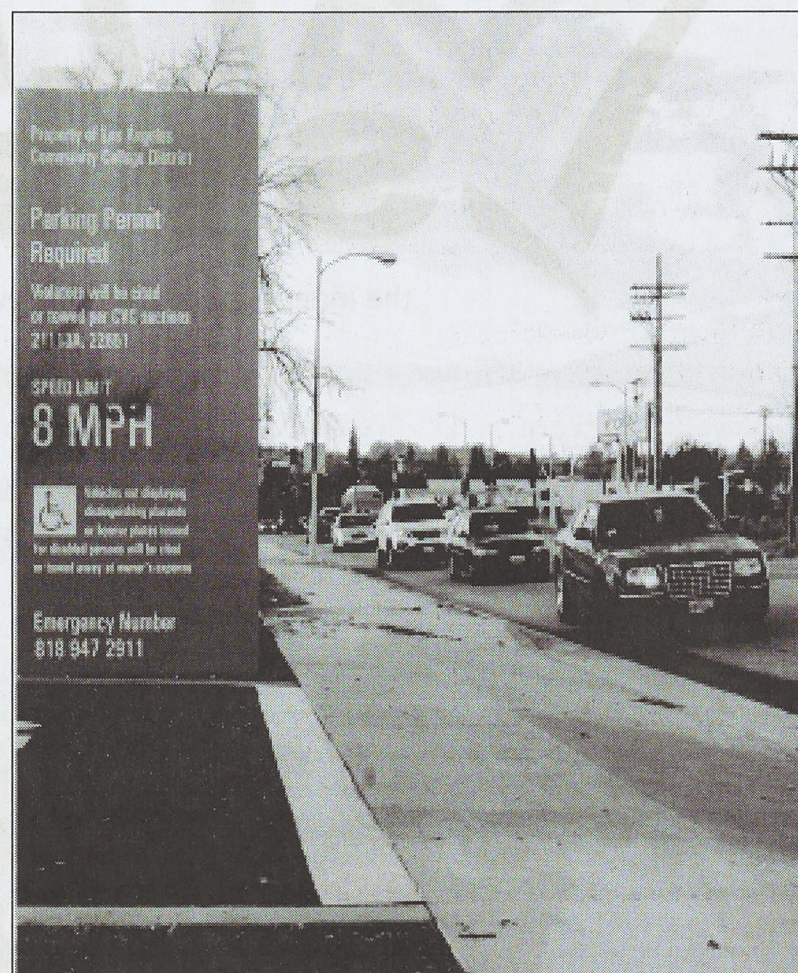
Nineteen-year-old Valley student Albert Gutierrez looks forward to the end of construction on campus but wonders if he will get to use the new facilities before transferring. Gutierrez is no stranger to learning on a campus that is under construction. He spent his four high-school years in the same building due to construction. "It bothers me that it's taking so long," Gutierrez said. "But oh well, pass it on [to the future students]."

Los Angeles taxpayers are funding the \$6.2-billion budget, and Valley is laying claim to \$630 million, according to the January Progress Report issued by the LACCD. Spending is earmarked for construction purposes only and therefore cannot be used to supplement the dwindling budget

to create extra courses or employ additional instructors.

Eloy Retamal, project director at Yang Management – the construction company managing "reVitalizing Valley College" – says the current projects are still within budget despite several setbacks in the past semester. Two contractors went out of business during the construction of the library and the parking lot, causing a one-year delay while replacement companies were hired, according to Retamal.

Solar-powered parking pay stations were recently installed in parking lots A and D; during the next few months, students may experience construction activities near the Stadium and the Campus Center in preparation for the IT Department Phase 2 project. Construction will also begin on the Media & Performing Arts Center on the corner of Fulton Avenue and Oxnard Street. Even though Valley is undergoing some serious changes to its appearance, it's business as usual on campus.



TRAFFIC-Valley College students await long lines to get into a busy campus parking lot. LORAINA AMENDEN | VALLEY STAR

## FINANCIAL AID

Continued from page 1

Board of Governors fee waiver, which covers tuition fees but does not assist with any expenses. Federal loans are also available but do have to be repaid upon completion of the student's education. Aside from state and federal funds, scholarships are also available. Though scholarships are not in abundance, a very minimal amount of students apply due to misconceptions about them.

If students are not sure how to

apply or which fund to apply for, there will be booths available at the event to help them complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before the March 2 deadline. Another Financial Aid Awareness Event will be held in April for students looking to get a head start on coming semesters.

"Even though the deadline is March 2, we want students to know they can still fill out the forms for next term," said Diaz.

## LOVE RESPONSIBLY

Continued from page 1

get tested; a total of 25 students checked to see if they were positive or negative.

Monica Hernandez, a counselor who has been with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation for three years, said 25 students was an exceptional turnout. On average, two to 10 people are considered a good number.

"Many people do not realize how easy it is to get free testing," said Hernandez.

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation and Student Health Center provided pamphlets with information on AIDS prevention along with goodie bags containing mints and condoms to promote students to love responsibly.

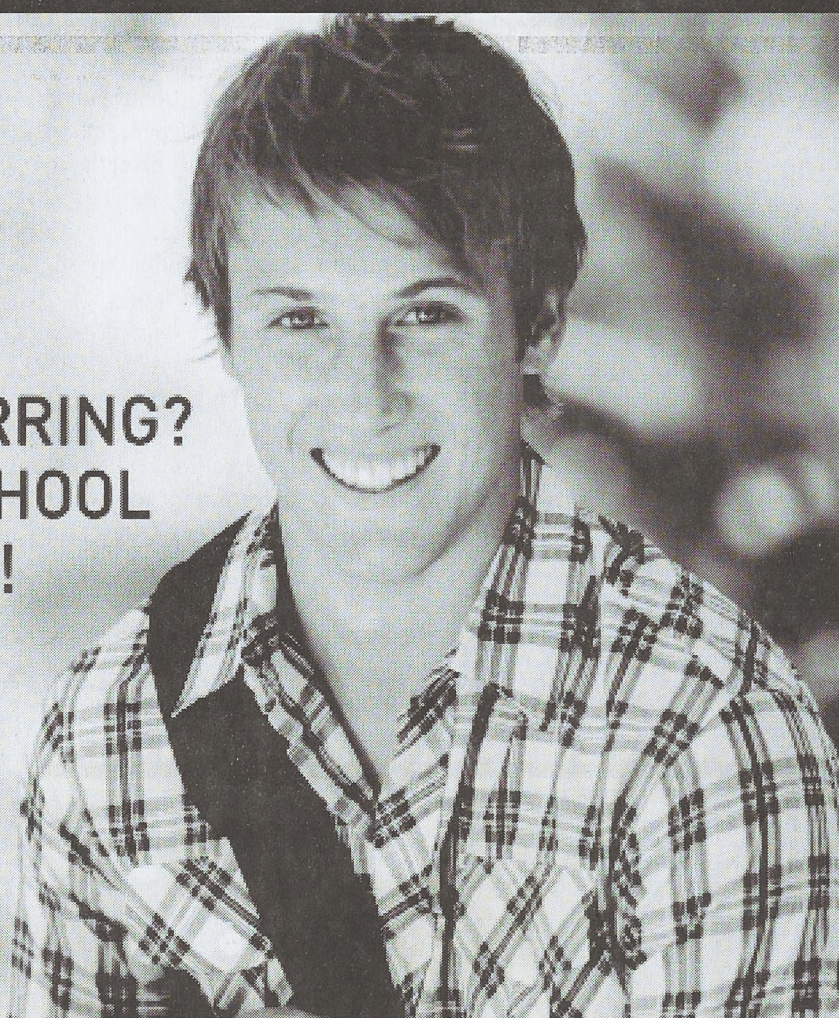
Students who missed the opportunity can visit the closest Out of the Closet used clothing store or the website freeHIVtest.net to find locations providing free testing.

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## THE ASU CALLS ON STUDENTS FOR ACTION

The ASU discussed plans to gather students for the "March in March," which takes place in Sacramento.

EDYTHE SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

The Associated Student Union met yesterday to discuss ways to get Valley College students and representatives to attend "March In March," a rally advocating affordable higher education for California Community College students, after missing a crucial deadline.

The focal point for public speaker Shawn Besharaty, TAE/PTK president and member of the Valley Lobby Committee, was transportation.

"We've run into a bit of a problem in terms of airline tickets," said Besharaty. "Friday was our last opportunity. We need your knowledge moving forward."

Finalizing the number of students is essential, and without air travel, busing seems to be the

only viable option. The council needs at least 10 days in advance to plan a field trip, which considering the event is March 5th, was yesterday. A list of advisers willing to accompany students to Sacramento is also needed. The biggest roadblock is getting students interested in a matter of days.

Each charter bus seats 45 to 50 people and costs \$2,200. For field trips, every 50 students would have to be accompanied by five chaperones and two security guards. Students would need to submit field trip forms in a matter of days, and insurance for the estimated number of students was also due yesterday. The ASU president, Norvan Berkezyan, asked the council to start advertising and rising interest immediately.

"Look for the [students] who are angry—the ones who are tired of all these budget cuts and struggling for classes," he said.

Club Day on campus takes place today from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Monarch Square. The plan is to advertise the march to various

student organizations and acquire signatures for those interested. Assuming there are at least 50 attendees, Valley students could have the opportunity to join the other colleges and be heard.

The ASU attorney general, Brandon Batham, called to attention that Valley will be facing a possible 7-percent cut in funding from the district level, which receives its funding from the state level. Over the past five years, Valley's budget has been cut by over 20 percent; currently 95 percent of the budget is spent on salaries and benefits for Valley staff and faculty according to Batham.

"March In March" presents an opportunity to stand up to those numbers. Gov. Jerry Brown is supporting a ballot initiative that would raise state and sales taxes in the November 2012 election.

"There's \$150 Million missing from the budget," said Batham. "We have to think about the districts that will be largely affected."



CALL TO ACTION - Vice President Eduard Grigoryan (right) talks about the transportation to Sacramento for the "March In March" as ASU President Norvan Berkezyan (left) listens. JD OROYE | VALLEY STAR



EDITOR'S NOTE:  
The views expressed on this page are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Valley Star, its instructors, editors, staff or those of Los Angeles Valley College, its administrators, faculty, staff, or students.

## THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE BILLION-DOLLAR CORPORATION

Apple faces the disapproval of hundreds of thousands of people who oppose its employee treatment.

COURTNEY BASSLER  
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Look around, and one is bound to find an Apple product nearby. It might be someone making a phone call on an iPhone or a toddler tracing out the first letters of the alphabet on an iPad. This new year, Apple is faced with ups, downs, twists and turns.

“These scenes of the technology company are good, bad and ugly.”

According to USA Today, in January, Apple beat out ExxonMobil as the most-valuable company in the world market, with a worth of almost \$500 billion. Apple's market value is worth 16 percent more than Exxon's. Apple shares have had a 40-percent rise since last February and a nearly 500-percent gain from five years ago.

Apple is always looking for ways to improve its products; so, it's no wonder that the stock has now beat out the well-known petroleum company. Take a look at Apple products over the years. Laptops were made with custom colors such as grape and tangerine. Now, a computer weighs less than a bag of flour. Even the iPod that originally sported buttons and a click-wheel



EDYTHE SMITH | VALLEY STAR

REGRET - Those who jumped on the Apple bandwagon are reaping the benefits.

currently pins onto a shirt while working out.

“It's a once-in-a-generation company that reinvents markets and does no wrong,” said Michael Walkley, an analyst at Canaccord Genuity, in USA Today.

But, that's just the pretty part of this company.

While some departments at the Cupertino-based company were high-fiving on the success of being the most sought-out company in the world, others were feeling the strike of the Fair Labor Association. The multinational electronic manufac-

turing company, Foxconn, is being scrutinized for its labor conditions and reports of suicides and accidental deaths. Think about that the next time Siri answers a question.

According to USA Today, the Fair Labor Association will interview thousands of employees about the working and living conditions and is inspecting worker housing. The earliest results of the inspections will be in March. FLA will also look at the Quanta and Pegatron facilities in the spring to review more than 90 percent of Apple's assembly lines.

Awareness and change is on the move with many people focusing on the working conditions. More than 200,000 people have put their names on a petition on change.org for Apple to improve the way that its factory employees are treated.

Although many enjoy the new and ever-changing products that Apple produces, it's important to know what is really going on behind the scenes. These scenes of the technology company are good, bad and ugly. Choose a stance and know what is going on.

## WAITING TO EXHALE

In the wake of Whitney Houston's death, the public should consider its how liable it is.

BRAD TAYLOR  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The death of pop icon Whitney Houston is just the latest in a celebrity-obsessed culture that destroys its heroes with an onslaught of tabloid headlines, turning a once amazing talent into a one-note joke.

Houston was found dead in a Beverly Hilton bathtub on Feb. 11. The cause of her death has not been revealed, but many speculate it was due to prescription drugs and alcohol. Minutes after the sad news was released, social networks were buzzing with speculation on how she died and even jokes calling her a “crack-head.” It was almost as if we expected her death and had our comments pre-planned.

Michael Jackson and Amy Winehouse are two recent tragedies that caused equal amounts of sorrow and macabre delight by a fame-obsessed culture. In our current state of constant celebrity monitoring, we see these talented artists break down in front of our eyes. Lindsay Lohan and Charlie Sheen are often celebrated for their descent into substance abuse. Sheen has more than six million followers on Twitter while Lohan has more than three million; in this age of instant information, we ravenously watch them like buzzards.

Houston is the most-awarded female performer in history, with a staggering 415 career awards, including six Grammy Awards and two Emmys. It is astounding that someone as accomplished as this could fall so far. The star had a

nightmare of a marriage to R&B bad boy Bobby Brown and was part of a horrid reality show. Her career spun out of control for almost a decade while fans looked on. In 2009, Houston released the album “I Look to You,” which hit number one its first week and spawned two hit singles, but her performances were torn apart by fans and critics seemingly wanting “the old” Houston back.

Houston can be seen on YouTube videos messing up words to songs and simply leaving the stage during many shows. In her final days, Houston appeared happy but erratic as she interrupted interviews, was seen in mismatched clothes and was even spotted doing handstands by a pool.

On the verge of bankruptcy and working on a comeback, the superstar was attempting to return to the spotlight, which is ironically the same scenario as when Jackson was found dead. Much like her fellow celebrities, her talent had been over-shadowed by her addictions. “Saturday Night Live” and “MadTV” used her as a punch line for years, and it seemed like comedieness like Maya Rudolph and Debra Wilson could pull a hilarious Houston at will.

As spectators, we have become that friend at a party who knows someone is driving drunk but never takes away the keys. We can only imagine how Houston's friends and family feel and how much her fans are grief-stricken at this moment, but how much is the public responsible for her meltdown? Between Facebook, Twitter, “TMZ” and countless tabloid rags, the public learned nothing from the past and instead looks into the coliseum to see who will fight the lions next.

## THE DREAM ACT COULD TURN INTO A NIGHTMARE

The DREAM Act threatens to take away classroom seats that belong to those with citizenship.

ROBERT DECKER  
STAFF WRITER

California, ranked as the fifth-largest economy in the world, is buckling under its own weight, and no one is feeling the squeeze more than the education system. In these times of woe and want, with unemployment hovering around 10 percent and more adults returning to school to polish skills so they can compete in the job market, an initiative like the DREAM Act is destined to fail. And fail it should, for now at least.

The DREAM Act is legislation that allows underage illegal immigrants who fit certain criteria – including being a graduate of a U.S. high school and having lived in the United States at least five years – the same access to education as citizens. In a time when the economy is in a dire state and resources are limited, the state is in no position to extend this type of privilege to outsiders.

The effects of the budget crisis have been wreaking havoc on the community college and Cal State systems since day one. Campuses have slashed class offerings, canceled winter and summer sessions, scaled back enrollment and transfer rates, increased tuition and even raised their enrollment of international students to gain on tuition fees.

“But at a crucial time like this for the state, Californians can't just drive it until the wheels fall off, or else everyone will be stuck.”

Students put up with it.

Now, the L.A. Times and other media outlets are reporting on CSUN having to phase out 2,800 full-time students to avoid a \$7-million fine for over-enrollment. Given its proximity to CSUN, Valley College is sure to feel the impact of these de-enrollments.

And now, students are being told they should add the initiative of citizenship that could potentially add millions of eager names to the roster. It simply won't work in a state that the Legislative Analyst's Office, one of the biggest nonpartisan fiscal advisory groups in the state, says is looking at a \$25-billion budget deficit.

No one can deny the hard work it takes to make it through college. College graduates of illegal immigration status should be allowed a shot in the job market – the state would benefit from a program that slowly grants citizenship after assimilating established college graduates and skilled workers of illegal status into the work field, allowing citizens to gain from income taxes. But at a crucial time like this for the state, Californians can't just drive it until the wheels fall off, or else everyone will be stuck.

An act as big and drastic as granting full citizenship to all who came here before they were 16 years old and are willing to spend just two years in college or the military would devastate our already-crumbling public higher education system.

## MARRIAGE IS A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE

California's Proposition 8 has been shot down as part of a new wave of support for same-sex marriage.

KEVIN JERSEY  
STAFF WRITER

An appeals court has ruled that a proposed law banning same-sex marriage is unconstitutional. That is great news, but it is not enough. It is time for Proposition 8 to be repealed completely and for California to recognize that everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, has the right to marry the person they love.

Courts have repeatedly said that all people have the right to be treated equally, yet there are still people who want nothing more than to deny same-sex couples that right. Those people are wrong. They are using a false sense of morality to oppress a group of people who they see as different.

Two of the three justices who heard the appeal rejected the proposal, ruling that it “serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians in California, and to officially reclassify their relationships and families as inferior to those of opposite-sex couples.”

Gays and lesbians are not inferior, and neither are their relationships. Love between two people is

a beautiful thing, and to think that it could somehow be any less simply because the two people share a gender is ridiculous. More than that, it shows that anyone with that opinion does not know what love really is.

“Marriage is a right. It is a right that all loving couples should have, not something that should be used to divide “us” from “them.”

This country has a history of evolving its views on marriage. There was a time not so long ago when a couple would have been forbidden to marry based solely on a difference of the color of their skin. However, the lawmakers of this country came to their senses and realized that love does not see color.

It is time for them to come to their senses and realize that love does not see gender either. Love is love, and it is something that should be celebrated by anyone lucky enough to find it, not just those who happen to fall into an outdated and erroneous definition championed by a vocal minority of people.

Opinions are shifting. While the

opposition may make a lot of noise, the actions of the majority speak louder than the words of the minority, and those favoring marriage equality are now that majority. New York and Washington have both voted to recognize same-sex marriage and will soon be joined by Maryland. The New Jersey legislature also voted to approve same-sex marriage, though the governor has ignored their vote and decided to veto the decision. Nationwide recent polls show for the first time that more Americans support same-sex marriage than oppose it. This support is even stronger amongst voters between the ages of 18 and 29, suggesting that additional equal rights laws will be passed and additional discriminatory laws will be repealed as more youth enter the voting booths.

Marriage is a right. It is a right that all loving couples should have, not something that should be used to divide “us” from “them.” People who claim to be protecting the institution of marriage don't know whom “us” is. They think “us” means heterosexuals, but it doesn't. Everyone is “us.” Everyone wants to love and be able to declare their love for another person in an official, binding way. Everyone deserves the right to celebrate that love and share it with the world, and no one can take that right away.

## VALLEY VIEW | Do You Think California Should Follow the Lead of Other States and Legalize Same-Sex Marriage?



“Everyone should be treated equally. People should be allowed to marry who they want to marry.”

-LUKE OCHOA,  
GRAPHIC DESIGN



“Gay marriage shouldn't be illegal just because someone's religion says so.”

-AMANDA STANLOW,  
THEATER



“It's illogical. I don't think that it's right.”

-MARY RUKHKYAN,  
BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION



“It doesn't matter to me. That's their decision. If they want to get married, they should be able to get married.”

-JULIO SANTAMARIA,  
KINESIOLOGY



“It should be allowed. Everyone deserves to marry who they want.”

-MIRKA PEREZ,  
NURSING

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Letters to the editor can be sent to [editorinchief@lavalleystar.com](mailto:editorinchief@lavalleystar.com) or submitted online at [www.lavalleystar.com](http://www.lavalleystar.com). Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed. Send by Thursday for the following week's issue.



## LAVC Events

### FEBRUARY

#### Wednesday, 22

Club Day  
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Sponsored by the Associated Student Union  
Monarch Square  
Contact: 818-778-5516

Free Concert Wednesdays  
1 p.m.  
Sponsored by the LAVC Music Dept.  
Performance by the Avon String Quartet  
Music 106  
Concert Hotline:  
818-778-5633

#### Thursday, 23

Sidewalk Chat with Dr. Carleo  
11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Sponsored by LAVC EOPS  
Contact: 818-947-2726

Job Shadow Day Orientation  
1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.  
Sponsored by the LAVC Career/Transfer Center  
Student Services Annex - Career/Transfer Center  
Contact: 818-778-5576

#### Friday, 24

Astronomy Group Planetarium Show  
8:00 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Sponsored by LAVC Earth Science Department  
LAVC Planetarium  
Contact: 818-947-2864

#### Monday, 27

Strategies for Success: Reading a Textbook  
1:00 p.m. to 2:30 pm  
Sponsored by STARS (Strategic Team for the Advancement and Retention of Students) & PASS (Preparing All Students for Success)  
Student Services Multipurpose Room  
Contact: 818-947-2712

## WHEN DRUMS AND ORCHESTRA COLLIDE: CLASSIC ROCK GETS A MAKEOVER ON SATURDAY

**The Valley Symphony Orchestra gives a one-time concert of "Classic Rock."**

**EDYTHE SMITH**  
STAFF WRITER

The concert for Valley's Symphony Orchestra last Saturday was something to behold. One could find oneself going from anxious to transfixed as 36 musicians went from street clothes to tuxedos and semi-formal attire—the bright lights adding to the wonder.

The "Classic Rock" theme presented a familiar atmosphere. Behind the orchestra was a full drum kit, slightly obscured by Plexiglas, which would be occupied by the star for the evening: Oren Halmut, sporting a red-tipped mohawk.

Halmut has been playing drums for 20 years and has been a student at Valley for two. Music Department Chair Dr. Michael Arshagouni was the conductor. He and Halmut collaborated on the concept, which is what made the concert unusual and interesting.

The playlist was the first of many surprises. The orchestra opened with Led Zeppelin's "Rock And Roll," the drums keeping the flavor and rhythm of the tune while the other instruments gave it subtlety. The instrumentation emphasized the backbone of the music that is often overshadowed by vocals.

The oddities among the songs were Britney Spears' "... Baby One More Time" and Linkin Park's "Crawling," taking one back to earlier years and introducing the nuances and forms of the songs at the same time. That's what made

the show so exciting; the orchestra captured the feelings of songs from different generations and by doing so exposed the versatility of music.

The highlights of the show didn't end with the music. The lighting was fantastic, similar to a rock or pop concert. Beams of red, blue and green scanned the stage and the house while bright white lights popped like flash bulbs and reached a strobe effect with each song's climax.

The melody of the songs ranged from menacing to soft, and although members of the audience were familiar with the tunes — some never missing an opportunity to sing along — the orchestra tossed in a few surprises.

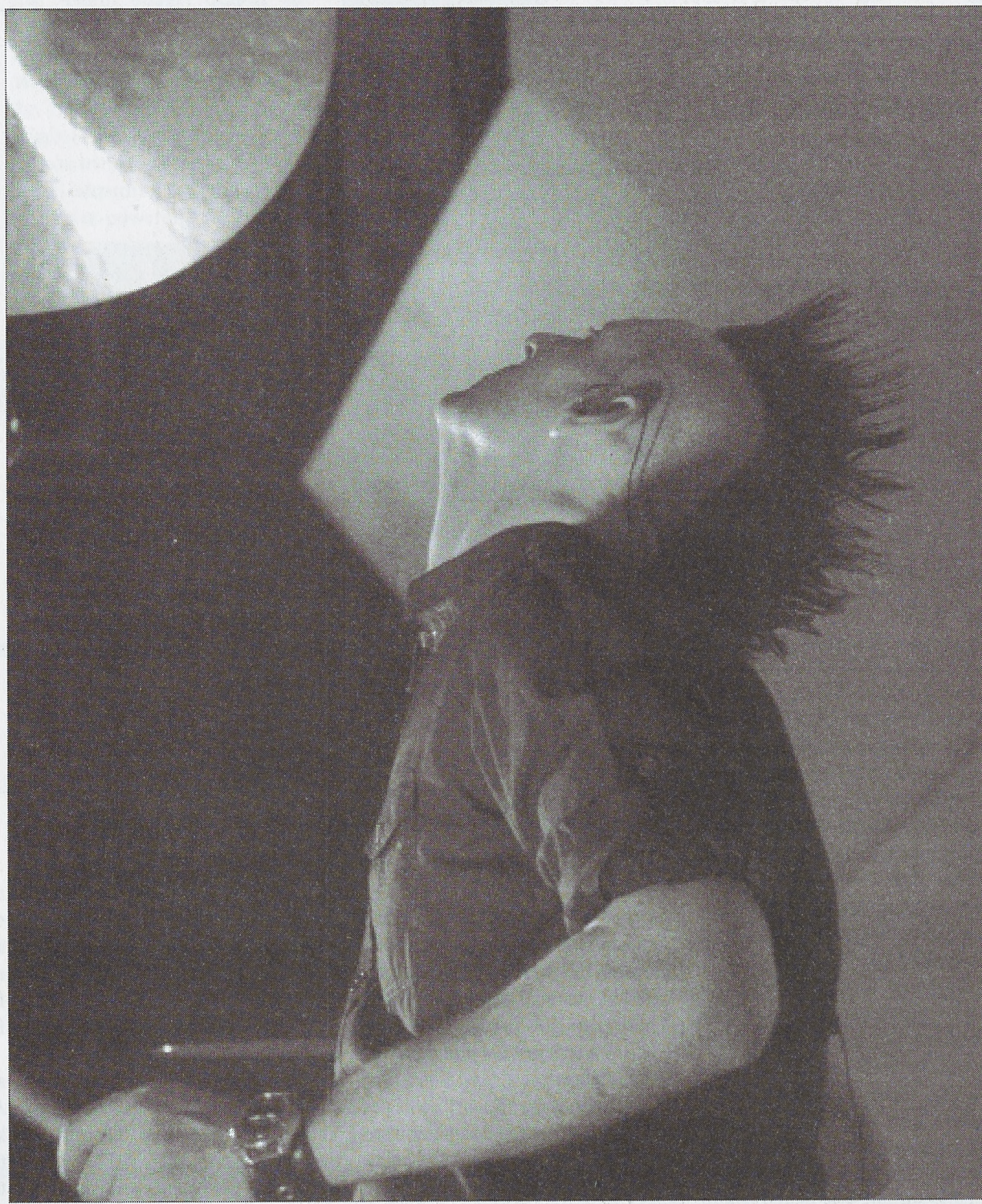
Halmut explained the project in terms of inspiration and craft.

"I was taking everything that I learned in the commercial and traditional music route and putting it together to make one big show—something that would represent everything," he said.

The show consisted of one classical number in which Halmut did not perform: Beethoven's "Creatures of Prometheus." Arshagouni took a brief moment to introduce its history before the show moved toward the finale. The last song was "Sweet Child of Mine" by Guns N' Roses.

As the conductor took a final bow alongside the players, few were aware that the show was the product of only two rehearsals. Arshagouni spoke in great detail about the importance of very little preparation.

"That's the very nature of what we're doing tonight," said Arshagouni. "It's a different kind of challenge. There are stylistic things here that make it very tricky ... a raw emotion and power."



MORRIS DE LA ROCA | VALLEY STAR

TIME KEEPER - The Valley Symphony Orchestra took its rhythmic cue from drummer Oren Halmut during its symphonic presentation of "Classic Rock" favorites.

### UPCOMING CONCERTS

**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 22**  
FREE WEDNESDAY CONCERTS  
AVON STREET QUINTET  
MUSIC 112, 1 P.M.

**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 29**  
FREE WEDNESDAY CONCERTS  
JUAN IGNACIO BAND  
MUSIC 112, 1 P.M.

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### FEBRUARY

#### Wednesday, 22

CSUN Mentor  
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Undecided Major/Career Workshop  
1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

#### Thursday, 23

CSUN Representative on Campus  
Appointments 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

#### Monday, 27

UCLA Peer Mentor  
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Undecided Major/Career Workshop  
5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

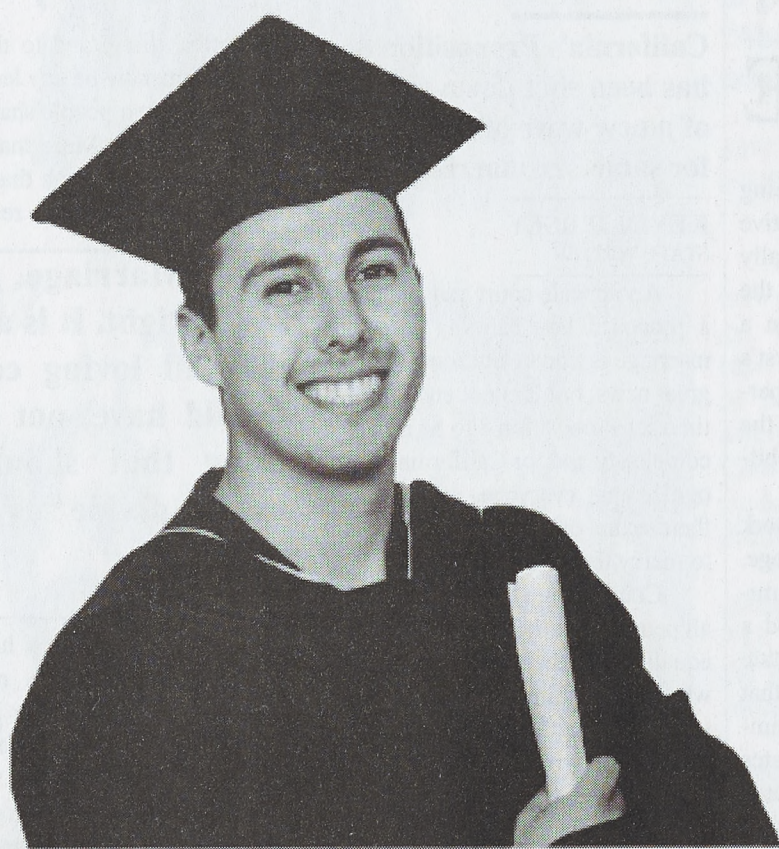
#### Tuesday, 28

CSUN Mentor 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

All activities held in the Career/Transfer Center (Administration 126) unless otherwise indicated.

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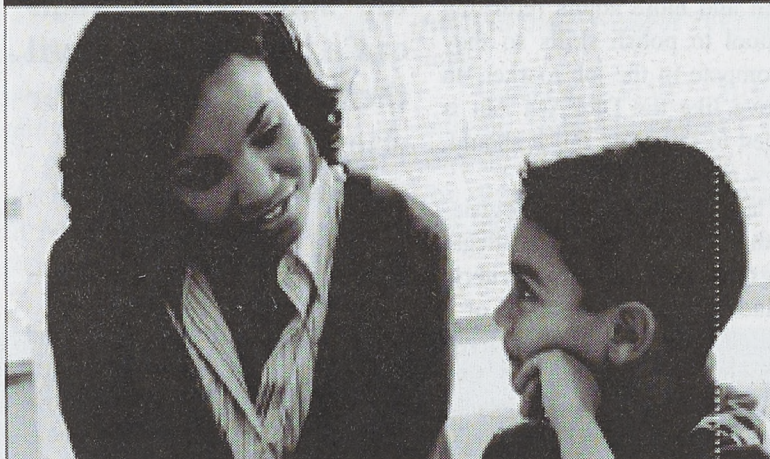
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## FORMER ASU ATTORNEY GENERAL MOVES ON

**Brandon Batham will be the voice of the students in the LACCD as the Board of Trustees' interim student trustee.**

**COURTNEY BASSLER**  
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Political science major Brandon Batham, the new interim student trustee for the Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees, is the sum of his parts.

Batham will be the sole student voice of the nine colleges in the district. Batham is doing his best to meet with student government boards and students. He has already met with the Valley, Mission, City and Trade Tech colleges' student governments.

"It's overwhelming to just realize that ... everything affects me, affects anybody else that goes to college in our district," he said. "It's something that I have to voice and [be of] concern."

Leonardo Herrera, Associated Student Organization senator of social activities at Mission College, thinks Batham is approachable and

will embody the opinions of students.

"I feel like I can voice a concern to him," said Herrera. "He is attempting to establish a relationship with [the] ... colleges. He is putting the students first before politics. That is rare."

Valley President Dr. Sue Carleo met with Batham at the beginning of the month to discuss students' concerns.

"He is smart and a good listener," said Carleo. "I think he will represent student interests well. [Valley] has a history of strong student trustees, and it will be nice to have another success story to add to our legacy of student leaders."

The road to Batham becoming student trustee started with accepting a position as attorney general for Valley's Associated Student Union, and he later would also become treasurer on the regional level. Yesterday was his last official meeting as ASU's attorney general at Valley, as he steps down to focus on his student trustee position.

However, the challenge of representing students is only one of the many that he's had to face.

Batham is one of the three million Americans living with epi-



FINAL ACT - Brandon Batham participates in his last ASU meeting as Attorney General before taking on the role as Student Trustee.

lepsy, a condition that causes seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions, according to epilepsysociety.org.

"I have gone a good seven years now without a seizure; it's been a tough road," he said. "It's become a big part of who I am and what I do."

In 2008, his mother, a pediatric nurse and a single mother, came out as a lesbian. Two years later, he met his father for the

first time. His father passed away from a stroke shortly after their meeting. Ready to attend a four-year school, he had to finish high school during the summer because of his time spent with his father.

"The life experiences that I've had definitely allowed me to handle ... significantly ... more stress than a lot of other people can," he said. "I've learned when people say 'live life to the fullest,' I don't. I say you have love to the

fullest. Life is not about building experiences ... or getting rid of that bucket list; it's about the relationships that you build."

Batham will be sworn in at the district office today. He will be the voice and advisory vote of nearly 250,000 students in the LACCD. He encourages any student to come to him with any concerns. Students can email him at [brandonbatham@gmail.com](mailto:brandonbatham@gmail.com) or find him on campus.

## FREE MUSIC SERIES FOR ALL

**The Valley College music department will begin its weekly free concerts Feb. 22.**

**DAVID MOTTE**  
STAFF WRITER

Every week during the semester, the Valley College music department hosts a free concert to entertain and educate students and the community. This semester, the free concert series starts today, Feb. 22, with a performance by the Avon Street Quintet.

Associate professor of music Dr. Christian Nova runs and hosts the concerts every week, exposing students to an array of musical genres.

"The performances are of the highest professional quality in the Los Angeles area," said Nova. "Besides a need to expose our students to traditional ensembles and genres of music, I am always on the lookout for interesting groups to present on the series. Our goal is to interest our audiences in types of music that they might not ordinarily experience."

Shows in the past have included instrumentalists who play with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and



NEW MUSIC, SAME SOUL - Many different music groups participate in the free concerts.

many other local orchestras and ensembles, singers who perform with the Los Angeles Opera and jazz bands of various sizes. A mixture of non-Western and ethnic music ensembles have also performed, such as classical Indian music, Mariachi bands, Latin Salsa bands and percussion ensembles, as well as a variety of contemporary music ensembles. Student and faculty shows are also part of the program.

"We feel it is important to provide a variety of concerts," said

Nova. "We have a very limited budget and only pay each musician a small honorarium; they have always been very gracious to share their music with our students and community ... basically for free."

The shows are not only limited to students. Audiences often include a number of senior citizens from local assisted-living facilities to other community members.

The free concert series starts Wednesday, Feb. 22, at 1 p.m. in the music building's Music Instrumental Room, in room 112.

## FILMS FOR FRIDAY NIGHTS

**The foreign language department offers a free film series for students.**

**EDYTHE SMITH**  
STAFF WRITER

For those who love cinema, learning about different languages and cultures, or are looking for an alternative to a normal Friday night, Valley College hosts a free weekly German and French film series.

The French department developed its series after hosting films each semester as adjuncts to the French club. Instructor Dominique Merrill developed an official series with the club's president shortly after the German department started screenings four years ago.

"It's an activity that we thought students could use to enjoy learning French and French culture—not just French culture, but Francophone culture, which includes so many other countries," said Merrill.

Films were shown as a part of

cultural enrichment and a sense of awakening. Last year's "La Haine" exposed students to the underbelly of urban Parisian life that is rarely highlighted within cinema or academics.

"Everyone thinks of 'Paris' and 'France' but there are issues, like in every large city, that have to be faced," explained Merrill.

Instructor Vic Fusilero started the German series in 2008. Screenings for German films will take place in Foreign Language 104. Refreshments are often culturally appropriate, like a German dish or dessert.

Unlike the French series, the German films are chosen by theme, like "The Holocaust" or last year's "The Outsider in German Cinema," a retrospective that introduced "the other" in German culture, such as ethnic groups, homosexuals and religious icons.

"Sometimes, I'll do themes that I feel are important to the students," said Fusilero. "I think they all touch on peoples' lives, especially minorities. You're not

just learning a language; you're learning to understand the people and the culture. [Students] can see how it's used in everyday language, not just in the abstract."

This year's theme, "Love + Violence/German + Film," gives students a chance to examine violence in the films and relate it to the culture. The first film, to be shown Feb. 24 at 6 p.m., is "North Face," directed by Philipp Stölzl.

German students receive extra credit for attending and get a chance to socialize with students from different language levels. Janet Moltke, a returning German language student, goes for more than the points.

"I love it because it's so artistic," said Moltke. "It's not mainstream. There's more symbolism and meaning to those types of films—it's not your typical Hollywood storybook. You feel your way into those movies. You feel their lives and you get involved even though they're so different."

## FORMULA FOR 2012 SUMMERFEST: BLOOD, PETS AND CHEERS

**Three departments prepare for the third season of Summerfest amidst obstacles from budget cuts.**

**EDYTHE SMITH**  
STAFF WRITER

Audiences have seen the murder and mayhem of "Sweeney Todd" go from Broadway to a feature film; now the community will see it with dance and modernity—thanks to Valley College's Summerfest.

Summerfest, founded in 2010, is the first on-going performing arts collaboration between three different departments: dance, music, and theater arts. Many of the founders will produce this season, including music instructors Dr. Christian Nova and Dr. Patricia Hannifan, theater arts instructor Christopher Coddington, and Cathy Susan Pyles, theater arts department chair.

"This collaborative idea of dance, music and drama is something that we all wanted to do," said Pyles. "We were concerned that there wasn't enough activity in the summer."

The program's debut production of "Cabaret," was followed by an original after-show cabaret directed by Dr. Nova. This season will comprise Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" and two short comedic operas: "The Pet Shop" and "Gallantry."

Some challenges to this year's production are having a good representation of the departments and preparing for a rigorous score.

Hannifan is the musical director for "Sweeney" and Pyles is directing the show. Dr. Yih-Mei Hu is the musical director for the operas, and Nova will direct the students with the score.

"I'm hoping to incorporate elements that 'modernize' each piece a bit," he said. "We discovered that a group that hadn't been represented adequately over the past few years of Summerfest was classical singers, so we decided to include the two operas."

Instructor Carla Lubow, a 15-year faculty member, is the choreographer and movement director for all three performances. Her role will go beyond the norm conceptually and aesthetically. Audiences can expect to see an array of dancing styles, including modern, jazz and ballet.

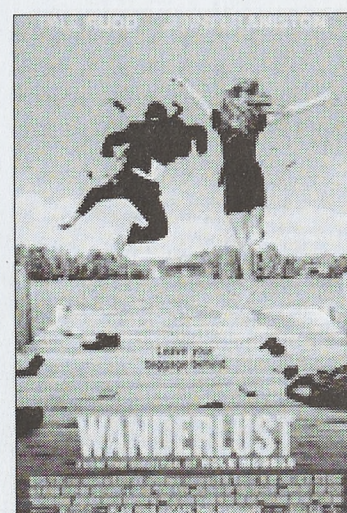
"I believe this coming season will be dramatic and compelling," she said. "Because the styles of the upcoming shows are not traditional, it forces me to be truly creative and find movement and concepts that will be effective. The material is meaty, and the students who auditioned were very strong."

Budget cuts have affected Valley tremendously, from library hours and student resources to class offerings. Those behind Summerfest are conscious of budget issues and are putting forth efforts to make the program self-sustaining.

"It's incredibly challenging," said Pyles. "We have to be 10 times more creative to make it work. We do have to make some compromises, but the college has been incredibly supportive of the program."

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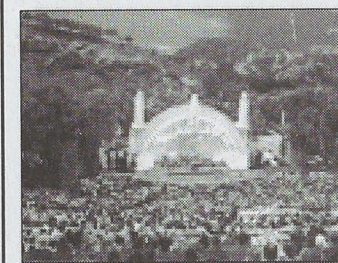
KATY PERRY

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- LED OF ZEPAGAIN: FEB. 24
- HOUSE OF BLUES
- RECKLESS KELLY: FEB. 25
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## THE LADY MONARCHS END SEASON WITHOUT PLAYOFF BERTH

**Despite three consecutive victories, the Lady Monarch basketball team missed its chance at the playoffs.**

**CRISTINA SERRATO**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The Valley College women's basketball team wrapped up the 2011-2012 season Saturday with a bittersweet 68-to-55 victory against the Glendale Community College Vaqueros.

"I feel good about the season. It ended off on a good note and I'm proud of my girls," said Lady Monarch guard Vanessa Aguilar.

"We pulled through. Despite being sick or hurt, we did good."

Though the Monarchs opened Saturday's game with an immediate 11-to-4 lead and an aggressiveness akin to pro ball, the Glendale team held its ground on home court and proved to be a formidable opponent.

"We should have not let [Glendale] come back," said 22-year-old Monarch guard

Leticia Pelayo. "We should have pushed our lead and rolled them out."

Valley took full advantage of its lead and attempted to widen the gap, but the Vaqueros refused to back down or be intimidated. Fighting to catch up and midway through the first half, Glendale put aggressive forward Daniela Parada on Aguilar. Parada adeptly blocked several of Aguilar's attempts at goals, but she moved gracefully, ducking and dodging her way into the Vaqueros basket repeatedly.

Visibly tired, the Monarchs ended the first half with a 36-to-24 lead.

"[Valley] came out strong. I think they're going to do well," said Valley fan Anthony Romauldo. "[The lead] is a big advantage because the other team doesn't have as much intensity."

The second half opened with Valley making two free-throws, after the Vaqueros received a foul for its newly aggressive behavior. Glendale had found its bravado and wreaked havoc upon the Monarchs, relentlessly blocking, stealing and making each basket the Monarchs attempted a feat.

Yet Valley kept its cool; using fancy footwork, a few graceful falls and fast thinking the Monarchs regained their footing and continued to score.

"We came out strong, we had our ups and downs, but we stayed together and got through it," said Pelayo.

Seemingly discouraged, Glendale racked up fouls as they struggled to maintain footing. Valley spectators loudly accused the referees of ignoring much of the Vaqueros' intentional fouling, but also the bad sportsmanship of Glendale's cheerleaders, who yelled "ribbit" during a few of Valley's free-throws.

Unfazed, Valley closed the game 68 to 55 at the free-throw line.

Though the Monarchs won, Coach Monica Hang declined to comment on the game, stating instead, "I don't want to discuss this win, this was not an example of how a game should go."

Deciding to take a more positive note, she reflected upon the past season, "The 2011-2012 season has been filled with excitement, challenges and heart aches. We have endured multiple heartbreaking losses that allowed us to learn and grow to become a better team. This team overcame many obstacles. They learned how to play hard and play as one. I am proud of them for never giving up."

The Monarchs ended the season with 18 wins and 12 losses, which left the team without a chance at the playoffs. Meanwhile, four of Valley's finest Vanessa Aguilar, Rachel Estrella, Ani Avanesian and Brianna Smyth were named to the 2011-2012 Western State Conference All conference.



SWISH - Lady Monarch guard Ani Avanesian scored two points in the team's Feb. 15 match-up against the Santa Monica College Corsairs. The team defeated the Glendale College Vaqueros Saturday in the team's final game of the season, 68-55. The Monarchs end with an 18-12 record.



EXCUSE ME - Monarch guard Vanessa Aguilar breezed passed Hattaya Viriyantont of Santa Monica College.

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## WOLMAN SHARES HIS PASSION FOR COACHING TRACK AND FIELD

**Valley College track and field coach François Wolman talks about his life accomplishments in track.**

**ROMEO GONZALEZ**  
STAFF WRITER

Valley College track and field coach François Wolman has had a passion for track ever since he stepped foot onto the Fairfax High School team as a sophomore.

"I fell into it," said Wolman. "This is my passion."

Born and raised in Paris, Wolman grew up playing soccer. He moved to Los Angeles at 12 and explained that there was a lack of teams in the area, which is why he chose track when he began high school.

There, he won two city championships in the 800-meter race and set school records that he still holds today. For his excellent athletic performance, he received a full scholarship to the University of Oregon where he again set a record for the 800-meter, the mile and 1500-meter races.

"Coach has been awesome," said Valley track and field athlete Mykel King. "He got the team well put together this season."

Wolman has been coaching for 30 years, both in high school and college. Formerly coaching

at Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks and Beverly Hills High School, Wolman was also an assistant coach at Santa Monica College for four years before coming to Valley in 1999.

"I enjoy coaching," said Wolman. "I enjoy dealing with kids."

Last year, the team earned ninth place in the state and has hopes of improving on that performance this year.

"We have been good partners since 1997," said Valley's women's track and field coach Yannick Allain. "I learned about managing and recruiting from him."

Due to the climate of community college athletics, each year is drastically different for the team. Some years are better than others, but Wolman tells his team to set goals every day. He tells them to achieve those goals and to work hard because in the end, it pays off.

"I'm definitely excited for the season," said hurdler Dárrrell Johnson. "This is going to be one of our better track seasons."

Wolman says his team is looking great and is looking forward to the season.

"We are excited about what we are seeing," said Wolman. "It's a promising season."



COACHING IT UP - Men's track and field coach François Wolman during a track meet at Cal State University Northridge.